6.

A SERMON PREACHED Before the KING,

ON THE

Second SUNDAY in *ADVENT*, *Decemb.* viii. 1678.

BY

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A SERMON PREACHED Before the KING.

ROMANS XV. 4. beginning.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.

THE Holy Scriptures are so full a Storehouse of all Divine Learning, and we are so frequently exhorted to repair thither for our constant Instruction; that as there is no Excuse for those who would lock them up from the people of God, and not suffer them to look into them: so they are no less worthy to be condemned, who will not look into them when they may; nor take any care to enrich their minds with those hea-

venly Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, which the Royal Pſalmiſt thought more pretious than *thouſands of Gold and Silver.*

To correct this Negligence, Our Church now calls upon us to pray in the Collect for this Second week in *Advent*, that we *may in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by Patience and Comfort of his holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of Everlaſting life*; which is infinitely more worth than all our preſent poſſeſſions in this World.

Now that we may do according to our Prayers, *mark* I beſeech you the firſt words of the Epiſtle for this day, which I have now read unto you: in which the Apoſtle commends to us the ſtudy of the holy Scriptures, from the Benefit we may receive by them; even by thoſe parts of them which may ſeem to you perhaps very barren, or little conducing to the Profit of Chriſtian People. For *Firſt* of all, we may learn ſomething, he tells us, for our Chriſtian Inſtruction, out of thoſe Scriptures which *were written aforetime*; in ancient dayes, before the *Advent* or Coming of our Saviour Chriſt. And *Secondly*, this Inſtruction is to be met withall in every part of theſe

theſe ancient Writings; for he ſayes, *Whatſoever things* were written heretofore, in the Sacred Volumes, were written for our learning. There is nothing unprofitable, nothing needleſs and ſuperfluous in them; but all tends to Edification. Nor were they written (you may further conſider in the *Third* place) for *their* Benefit alone who lived when they were written; but *for our learning* alſo, who live in the dayes of Chriſt. *For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.*

For the clearer underſtanding of all which Particulars, you may be pleaſed to obſerve, that theſe words ſeem to come in as an Anſwer to a tacit Objection, of ſuch as might fancy the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament did not appertain to Chriſtians, or contained nothing of Chriſt in them. For the Apoſtle had juſt before quoted a place out of the *Pſalms* of *David*, and applyed it to our Saviour; *Who did not pleaſe himſelf: but as it is written* (Pſal. lxix. 9.) *The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me.* And then (to prevent ſuch an Exception as I now mentioned) immediately addes, *For whatſoever things*

things were written afore time, were written for our learning. As if he had ſaid; Do not tell me that *David* ſpeaks there concerning himſelf: for, though that be true, He repreſented alſo a greater King than himſelf; and in ſuch words as thoſe Propheſied of the Reproaches and Perſecutions of Chriſt by the Scribes and Phariſees, after the ſame manner that he ſuffered by *Saul* and his Servants.

This plain declaration of the Apoſtle about the Scriptures written aforetime, ſhould have ſufficiently ſecured them, one would have thought, from all contempt; and preſerved a due Reverence towards them in the minds of all thoſe, who are called by the Name of Chriſt. But ſo deſirous the Malignant Spirit is, to have thoſe Holy Books thrown out of peoples hands; that he hath ſtirred up ſeveral Sects, who have not only aſperſed them, but utterly rejected them; as uſeleſs and unprofitable; nay dangerous and hurtful. In the Anſwer to whoſe Allegations I ſhall fully explain my Text; and ſhow how every part of thoſe Holy Books, which were written before Chriſts coming, contain ſomething for our learning and inſtruction.

And

And for our clearer proceeding, I think it will be neceſſary to obſerve, that the firſt Blaſphemers of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, were they who introduced the Doctrine of two Gods; one an Evil being, the God of the *Hebrews*; the other a good and gracious being, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The Ringleader of theſe, in all probability, was *Simon Magus* the *Samaritan*; who was followed by a rabble of vile people, ſuch as *Baſilides*, *Carpocras*, *Valentinus*, and a number more whoſe names are not worth the remembring. Who, though they did not profeſs his Name, yet followed his opinion, as *Irenæus* * ſpeaks, *For whoſoever they were*, ſaith he, *that Adulterated the Truth and ſpoiled the Doctrine of the Church, they were all the Diſciples and ſucceſſors of this Man.* No body doubts but the *Gnoſticks* were; *who are ſaid among the reſt of their Doctrines to have had this; of a Good God and an Evil God.* They are the Words of St. *Auſtin*, † in the concluſion of the account he gives us of their Hereſie. Which was followed no doubt by *Marcion*, *Apelles* and their Diſciples; who openly maintained this, to the great ſcandal of our Religion. For from hence I ſuppoſe it was that

* *Lib.* I. *cap.* 30.

† *cap.* VI. *de Hæreſ.*

Celſus

Celsus the Philosopher took occasion to charge Christians with this detestable opinion; that they held *an Execrable God* (Θεὸς κατηρατὸς) *opposite to the great God of all.* But they cleared themselves so well of this Crimination, in their admirable writings; that they neither left any colour for it, nor any considerable person that durst maintain it. Till, not long before the dayes of St. *Austin*, there started up a *Persian*, whose surname was *Manes*: who following other ancient Hereticks (as St. *Austins* words are *) revived this Opinion, when it was in a manner dead and buried: and from him it was ever after called the Heresie of the *Manichees*. Who held two first Co-eternal principles of all things, *diverse from, and adverse to* each other: (as he also speaks) as opposite as Light and Darkness; the one a Good, the other an Evil Being.

* *Cap* XLVI. *de Hæres.*

Now the Doctrine of these men concerning the Holy Scriptures, was conformable to their first foul opinion concerning God: and may be comprehenped in these *Five* propositions.

First, they said that *the Writings of the Old Testament were from the Evil Principle*;

Secondly, that they *belong'd only to the Jews, not to Christians*;

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That they were *not profitable for the Confirmation of Faith*; nor,

Fourthly, For *the teaching good Manners*; but rather deſtructive to them; And

Laſtly, That they *contradicted the New Teſtament* of our Lord and Saviour Chriſt Jeſus.

The ſolly of which, if I may have leave briefly to repreſent, it will be the cleareſt Explication I can give of theſe words of St. *Paul*; and let you ſee how much we may learn, even out of the Scriptures which were written aforetime.

I.

The *firſt* of them [viz. *That the Writings of the Old Teſtament were from the evil Principle*, the *Law* and the *Prophets* being dictated by bad Angels,] is ſuch a ſenceleſs Blaſphemy, that I ſhould have wholly omitted it; were it not for the reaſon now mentioned: that it gives a fair occaſion to ſhew, there is ſomething worth our learning even in ſuch Hiſtorical paſſages of the Old Scriptures, as ſeem leſs inſtructive. For S. *Paul* having plainly declared that the Law and the Goſpel had the ſame Author, when he ſaith iii. *Galat.* 24. *The Law was our School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt*:

proceeds in the next Chapter of that Epiſtle to illuſtrate this moſt elegantly from the Hiſtory of *Abraham*; who had two Sons (iv. *Gal.* 22.) the one by a Bond-maid, the other by a Free-woman: the firſt of which was born after the Fleſh, but the other was by Promiſe. *Which things* (ſaith he, *v.* 24.) *are an Allegory*: *for theſe are the two Covenants, or Teſtaments*; the one from Mount *Sinai*, which gendreth to Bondage; the other from *Jeruſalem* or *Sion*, which is free, the Mother of us all.

Where we learn theſe two things. *Firſt*, That even in ſuch hiſtorical Relations as theſe, the Apoſtles read diviner things; which they ſaw there lye hid and concealed. For that's his meaning, when he ſaith, theſe things are *an Allegory*; *aliud portendentia* (as *Tertullian* expounds it*) a ſpeech about another matter, portending ſomething elſe than at firſt ſight appears. For he clearly diſcerned, that under the Names and Actions of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*; God was pleaſed to foreſhadow what He intended to do in future times, both at the giving of the Law, and when He ſent his Son to preach the Goſpel. And *Secondly*, we learn, that as thoſe two Wives of very different Condition, had but

* L. V. *contra Marcionem*, c. 4.

but one and the ſame Husband, who was the Father of thoſe two Children: So the two Teſtaments, the Old and the New, which were repreſented by thoſe two Women, belong to one and the ſame God; who brings forth and breeds up his Children under various Diſpenſations, but is the Father of all thoſe who lived piouſly under the Old Teſtament, as well as of thoſe who live ſo under the New.

This is the neceſſary Conſequence of the Apoſtles Diſcourſe. If thoſe two Wives and their Children were an *Allegorie* of the two Teſtaments, and of thoſe who were born and bred under them; then as thoſe two Children had the ſame Father though different Mothers, ſo the two Teſtaments have the ſame Original; though they be Diſpenſations as different as the Bond-woman and the Free. There cannot be a more evident Confutation of the falſe Principles of theſe Men, than this Obſervation of the Apoſtle. Who in the beginning of this Epiſtle (i. *Rom.* 1, 2.) calls himſelf *an Apoſtle, ſeparated unto the Goſpel of God, which he had promiſed afore by his Prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And in the entrance of the Epiſtle

to the *Hebrews* openly avows, that the ſame *God who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt dayes ſpoken unto us by his Son.*

But I ſhall not trouble you any further in ſo manifeſt a buſineſs; having thus far obtained my end; which was to ſhew that the Hiſtorical Books are not unuſeful, but more ſerviceable than many imagine; not merely becauſe they relate the wonderful Providence of God over that People for whoſe uſe they were firſt written, in bleſſing them when they were faithful to him, and puniſhing them when they revolted from him; but becauſe they contain many ſecret Repreſentations of things belonging to the Perſon and the Kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

II.

The next part of their wicked Doctrine was, that the Old Teſtament *did not belong to Chriſtians, but only to the Jews.* This *Fauſtus* the *Manichee* (againſt whom St. *Auſtin* wrote XXXIII. Books) endeavoured to perſwade by his Natural Eloquence and ſmooth way of ſpeaking (for which he was famous *) without any judgment or reaſon at all. For it is directly

* See St. *Auſt. confeſſions*, L. V. cap. 3. & 6.

directly confuted by the words of my Text; as if the Apoſtle intended to anticipate ſuch an Objection, and prevent the entrance of this extravagant Conceit into any bodies mind. The abſurdity of which appears alſo farther from hence; that the Promiſes made in the Old Teſtament belong to us Chriſtians, who are therefore concerned in the Teſtament it ſelf. Which is a Conſideration to which St. *Paul* directs us in the Epiſtle for this day; a little below my Text: *v.* 8. *Now I ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt was a Miniſter of the Circumciſion*; ſent, that is, to preach the Goſpel unto the *Jews*; *for the truth of God*; to juſtifie, that is, the Faithfulneſs of God who promiſed to ſend him, as it follows; *to confirm the Promiſes made unto the Fathers*; that is, make good thoſe Promiſes he had paſſed to them in ancient time; among which this was the chief, that he would ſend a Perſon into the World in the fulneſs of time, in whom all Nations ſhould be bleſſed. So it follows, *v.* 9, 10, &c. *And that the Gentiles might glorifie God for his Mercy; as it is written, For this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy Name. And again he ſaith, Rejoyce ye Gentiles, with his People. And again, Praiſe the Lord all ye Gentiles*, &c. *And again*

Eſaias

Esaias saith, He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust. All which places of the Old Scriptures are alledged to shew, that though this was the grand Priviledge of the *Jews*, that God had expressely obliged himself by Promises to their Fathers to send his Son Christ to them; of which Promises the *Gentiles*, i. e. People of other Nations were wholly ignorant, and knew not a syllable of this Grace: yet God intended to be so mercifull as to make all the world partakers of those Promises which the *Jews* alone had recorded in their holy Books. Which the Apostle proves was agreeable to the Books themselves wherein these Promises were contained. For they predicted that the *Gentiles* also should *rejoyce* in God, and *praise* him, and *sing* unto his Name, because Christ the Son of *David* should *reign* over them as well as his Ancient People, and they should place their *hope* and *trust* in him. This he urges from more places of the Old Scriptures (as well of the *Law of Moses*, *as of the Prophets and Psalms*, as you will find if you take the pains to examine them) than he alledges for the proof of any one thing whatsoever; for this great reason, That the Gentiles might be

be the more confirmed and ſettled in the Faith of the Goſpel, when they ſaw it was brought to them not by the Will of Man, but by the good pleaſure and Counſel of God, long before predicted in the Holy Scriptures of Truth.

This is a plain demonſtration how much we are concerned in the Scriptures written aforetime; whoſe true Learning the ſame Apoſtle ſhews in another place, is not underſtood by the *Jews*, but only by Chriſtians; to whom the Grace of God is tranſlated, which is taken away from the other, till they alſo Believe on Chriſt Jeſus. Read 2 *Corinth.* iii. 14, 15. where he ſaith, their Minds are blinded, and that they have a Veil upon them in the reading of the Old Teſtament: *Which veil is done away in Chriſt*, i. e. when men become Chriſtians. *But even unto this day, when Moſes is read, the veil is upon their heart: nevertheleſs when it* (their heart) *ſhall turn to the Lord* (our Saviour Chriſt) *the veil ſhall be taken away*; and not till then. Which is an evidence that we have more benefit by the Scriptures written aforetime, than the *Jews* themſelves, till they alſo turn Chriſtians; and abundantly confirms that pithy ſaying of *Tertullian* (which com-

comprehends all that need be ſaid in this Argument,) *Novum Teſtamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Teſtamentum in Novo patet*; the New Teſtament lyes hid in the Old; and the Old Teſtament is reveáled and diſcovered in the New. And ſo I have done with the *Second* Cavil of theſe men againſt the Old Teſtament.

III.

The *third* part of their impious Doctrine about this matter was, That the Scriptures written aforetime were *unprofitable for the confirmation of our Faith.* Which is directly againſt the whole Scope of the Apoſtle in this place, and is confuted in expreſs terms by our Bleſſed Lord himſelf in ſeveral places of the laſt Chapter of the Goſpel according to S. *Luke.* Where ſpeaking of his Paſſion to two of his Diſciples, *v.*25. 27. He upbraided them that they were ſuch Fools, and ſlow of heart to believe what the Prophets had ſpoken: *and beginning at Moſes and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himſelf.* And not long after appearing to all the Apoſtles, and eating with them, he ſaid (*v.* 44.) *Theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you while I*

was

was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. And then opening their understanding, that they might understand the Scripture, he said, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again the third day*, &c. So abominably false it is, which those Hereticks were wont to assert, that in the Old Testament there was no Testimony concerning Christ. They are the words of *Faustus*, as they are reported by St. *Austin* *: and may well make us wonder how any men that were called by his Name should arrive at such a boldness, as to contradict Christ himself, who proved all things concerning himself out of those ancient Books.

* *Lib.* xii. *contra Faust.* c. 1, 2.

But this it is to be proud and self-conceited; to be forward to teach †, before men have learnt; to be addicted to a Sect, and to love to contradict; to be engaged early in a party, and then to stop ones ears against the means of Information; to be carryed away with a strong antipathy to that, which men do not understand, nor have duly weighed and considered. Against all which Vices the Scriptures caution us sufficiently, if we mean

† *Vid. S.* Austin, Confess. l. V. c. 5.

to understand them: telling us plainly, that if we will not purge our selves from such ill humours, we shall become vain in our Imaginations, and our foolish hearts will be darkned. Witness the foolish exception that these men took to the Books of *Moses*, because they represented God, according to their Imagination, as desirous of the Blood and Fat of Beasts, which he required to be offered in Sacrifice to him. Whereas nothing is more manifest, than that God himself by the Prophets (who spake as they acknowledge by the same Spirit that *Moses* did) utterly disclaimed any delight or satisfaction that he took in mere Sacrifices, though never so numerous and costly: Nay, protests that he abominated them, if they were not brought to his Altar with a pious mind, and accompanyed with actions of Justice and Charity. Which makes it apparent, that it was the heart of the Offerer to which he had regard; and that he lookt upon these, but as outward testimonies and significations of a grateful Mind, or of a penitent heart, or of a Soul resolved to devote it self to his service.

I need not adde, that they were manifest Figures and Presignifications of the great Sacrifice

crifice of Chriſt Jeſus, who hath purged away our ſins by his own blood: nor take any further pains to confute theſe audacious Hereticks from other places of Holy Writ. I will rather take to task a little another ſort of men, no leſs bold and ſhameleſs; who would fain be thought the greateſt Enemies to Hereticks, of all men in the world. I mean them of the *Romiſh Religion*, who notwithſtanding their glorious pretences, would be heartily glad if this Propoſition could be made good, That the Scriptures written aforetime, are unprofitable for the Confirmation of Points of Faith. For our Writers have ſo overpower'd them with Teſtimonies fetcht from thence, that they are not able to ſtand before us to defend the Prime Article of their preſent Faith; that Article which is the principal Cauſe of the Diviſions of *Chriſtendome*, for whoſe ſake all other Controverſies have been craftily kept on foot; I mean that of the Supremacy of the Biſhop of *Rome* *: Which we utterly confound by beginning at *Moſes* (to allude to the words before mentioned) and ſo ſhewing through all the Scriptures written aforetime, that, *He*, and *Joſhua*, and *David*, and *Solomon*, and *Aſa*, and *Jehoſhaphat*, and *Hezekias*, and *Joſias*, go-

* *Romæ enim ſubjici, inde pendere, hæc Veſtræ Religionis ſumma eſt.* Reſp. ad Tort. p. 81.

verned the Prieſts and the whole Tribe of *Levi*: 'Ordering the time of their waiting 'and officiating in their Courſes; appointing 'Judges in Eccleſiaſtical Cauſes, and ſetting 'Preſidents over thoſe Judges; taking away 'abuſes and corruptions in Religion; com-'manding the *Ark* to be removed from one 'place to another, and calling the people by 'their Proclamations, to come and meet there 'before the Lord; requiring the Prieſts to 'read the Book of the Law, and to reduce 'things to a Conformity with it; renewing 'the Covenant of *Moſes* for Reformation of 'Religion; making Miſſions of Prieſts into 'ſuch parts of the Countrey, as they ſaw need-'ed their aſſiſtance; and (to ſay no more) e-'jecting the High-Prieſt himſelf, and depo-'ſing him from his Office.

Now what ſay our Adverſaries to all this? Truly, after many other poor ſhifts, they are at laſt driven thus far to ſide with the *Manichees*, as to ſay, that theſe things belong not to us: for that Authority which was in Kings under the Old Teſtament, is now tranſlated (if you will believe thoſe Doctors) unto the Prieſts under the New. But what man of ſenſe can entertain this wild fancy, that Kings under

under the Government of Chriſt, are in a worſe Condition than they were in under the Diſcipline of *Moſes*? Or that Chriſt ſhould ſingle out Kings of all other men, to be injurious to them, and deprive them of their former rights; when he left every body elſe in the very ſame eſtate wherein he found them? Was this our Saviours buſineſs (when he came *to reign over the Gentiles*,) to ſtrip their Princes of their Prerogatives, and leſſen their Power and Authority over their Subjects? How deteſtable would the Apoſtles have been, if they had broached this Doctrine, when they went out to convert the World? Or ſhall we be ſo impious as to think, that St. *Paul* equivocated, or had ſome mental Reſervation, when he Commanded *every Soul* in the Roman Church *to be ſubject to the higher Powers*? Mark, I beſeech you; it is upon the Church of *Rome* that he preſſes this Doctrine (Chapter xiii. of this Epiſtle,) more than upon any other Church whatſoever: as if he foreſaw there would be an Apoſtaſie among them from this Faith. *Let every Soul* be ſubject: *though thou beeſt an Apoſtle* (and the Biſhop of *Rome* I hope was never greater than ſo) *though an Evangeliſt, though a Prophet*,

phet, or whatsoever thou beest, thou must be subject: as S. *Chrysostome* (whose words these are) faithfully expounds the Apostles honest meaning.

And so Christian Princes long after his time, understood him; and did not fear both to assume this Authority, and to justifie it when they had done so, after the same manner that we do, by the Example of the Kings that ruled over the People of God before the Coming of Christ. Witness, to name one for all, *Charles* the Great; a Prince as great in Ecclesiastical Policy, as in Feats of Arms: who, in his Preface to his *Capitulary*, tells the Clergy of the Empire, 'That he had sent his Deputies to 'them; that they by his Authority, might, 'together with them, correct what stood 'in need of amendment; according to the 'Example of the godly King *Josias*, who 'endeavoured, saith he, to restore the King-'dom which God had given him to the 'Service of the true God; by going about it, 'by correcting and admonishing it, as we 'read in the xxiii. Chapter of the Second 'Book of the *Kings*.

And they had been very much to blame if they

they had not taken this pains. For as the forenamed S. *Chryſoſtome* admirably ſpeaks in a Sermon of his, recorded by one of the writers of his Life * ὁ γὰρ ὕπνος ἀνδράσι μέλει περὶ πολέμου, ὡς περὶ ἐκκλησίας· οὐχ ὕπνος περὶ πόλεως, ὡς περὶ ἐκκλησίας. *The Care appertaining to Kings is not ſo much about War, as about the Church; not ſo much about Political Affairs, as about the Church*: with whoſe Preſervation and Safety God having been pleaſed to intruſt them; he expects they ſhould be as angry with thoſe who would Adulterate his Worſhip therein ſetled, as *Moſes* was with *Aaron*, when he had made the Golden Calf. That very example is ſufficient to ſhew the Authority, which the Civil Magiſtrates have in matters of Religion. With which they ought not to part, no more than they would with their Crowns: nor to ſuffer their people to be deprived of theſe Holy Books wherein they may read theſe things; and thereby be ſo throughly poſſeſt with a ſenſe of their high Authority, that they may never be Debauched from their Duty. But of that more preſently.

* *Georgius Alexandrius.* Tom. ult. p. 265.

IV.

Let us firſt hear what the next exception of the

the *Manichees* was aginſt the Scriptures written aforetime; which they ſaid were *unprofitable to teach men good manners; nay, were deſtructive and contrary to them.* There are two parts you ſee of this wicked ſuggeſtion, the firſt of which is ſo directly confuted by St. *Paul* in another place, that one would think theſe men never read the New Teſtament at all, nor the Old for any other end, than to carp at it and frame Objections againſt it. For in 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. he expreſsly ſaies that πᾶσα γραφὴ *All Scripture* (ſpeaking of the *Old*, for not much of the *New* was then extant) *given by inſpiration of God, is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in Righteouſneſs.* Upon which words you may be pleaſed to take this ſhort gloſs. All Holy Learning conſiſts in being wiſe and in being good; in acquiring of both which, the Scriptures, being Divinely inſpired, give us ſingular aſſiſtance. As for the *firſt*, (Chriſtian Wiſdom) it conſiſts in knowing the Truth, and in rejecting Falſhood. Now behold how profitable the Scriptures are in both regards: For they are profitable *for Doctrine*, which is teaching the Truth; and *for reproof*, which is confuting the *falſehood* of Error. And then for the *Second* (learning

ing to be good) that ● consists of two parts more as the Prophets instruct us, to cease to do Evil, and to learn to do Well. To both which ends also the Apostle affirms the Holy Scripture is profitable: *for correction* that is, when we do amiss; and *for instruction in Righteousness*, to make us do better. And that (I may add) not only by its Precepts, but by its Examples: examples which strongly excite and quicken us to our duty; and which mightily deter and withold us from doing wickedly. I shall only mention some of the latter sort, which are drawn up to my hand by St. *Paul* in the next Epistle, 1 *Cor.* x. where he sets before that Church the example of the ancient *Israelites*; *with many of whom God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the Wilderness*, after he had brought them out of the bondage of *Egypt*, v. 5. And lest they should think themselves unconcern'd in such stories, he adds, v. 6. *Now these things were our examples; to the intent that we should not Lust after evil things as they also Lusted. Neither be ye Idolaters as were some of them; as it is written. The people sat down to Eat and Drink, and rose up to Play. Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for Examples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the World are come. So he concludes, after the same manner as he began, this pathetical discourse: Which we ought to lay to heart, and apply to our selves as much, as if he had told us in other words (which are but an explication of these,) 'I would not wil-
'lingly have you abuse your selves with false
'Opinions, and therefore do not imagine, I
'beseech you, that these things, which were
'done so long ago, do not belong to you;
'or that the Sins I have mentioned are not
'so deadly now as they were then: because
'those dreadful Miracles are ceased, and you
'see no devouring Fire, no Earth gaping to
'swallow you up, no fiery Serpents, nor de-
'stroying Angel smiting Multitudes dead in
'an instant. For *all these things*, that is, these
'Punishments, *happened unto them*, or were in-
'flicted upon the old *Israelites*, *for Examples*
'(or for *Types*, as it is in the Margin) of that
'Punishment which (notwithstanding Gods
'wonder-

'wonderful Grace to us, in delivering us out 'of a worſe Slavery than that of *Egypt*,) ſhall 'fall more heavily upon us than upon them, 'if we be diſobedient to him. The reaſon 'is, becauſe we are a Diviner and more Spi-'ritual People, of whom they were but the 'Types and Figures; and therefore can leſs 'expect to be indulged in ſuch wickedneſs as 'they ſmarted ſo ſorely for: but ought to 'be warned by their ſad Examples, and to 'look upon theſe things as recorded *for our* 'admonition; that we may learn, *i. e.* to be-'ware of ſuch ſins as thoſe now mentioned, 'which are far more provoking now than 'they were in former times.

But to this thoſe *Manichees* object (as we find in the formentioned *Fauſtus* *) that there are abundance of evil Examples in the Old Teſtament; which, they fancy, juſtifies the *Second* part of this Propoſition, That the Old Scriptures *teach things contrary to good Manners*. For we find in the Lives of the Patriarchs and Prophets, ſome things, not only blameable, but very wicked; as the Drunkenneſs of *Noah*, the Inceſt of *Lot*, the Murder and Adultery of *David*; and ſuch like.

* *Auguſt.* L. XXII. cap. 1. *contra Fauſt.*

To which I have a plain and true Anſwer; that even from the recording of theſe things we may learn very much; if we will read ſuch parts of the Holy Scripture, as we ought to do all the reſt, with a piouſly diſpoſed Mind. I ſhall mention *four* things, that thoſe Examples teach us, if we be inclined to make a good uſe of them. 1. Something *to confirm our Faith.* 2. Something *to guide the Courſe of our Lives.* 3. Something *to preſerve us from Sin.* And, 4. Something *to recover us*, in caſe we fall into it.

I. Firſt, I ſay, they may ſerve very much to confirm our Faith; and to make us leſs doubt of the truth of the Hiſtory of the Bible. Which it is manifeſt was not invented for the Honour and Credit of the Jewiſh Nation; becauſe it faithfully relates even the fouleſt blemiſhes of their Noble Anceſtors: which, if it had been indited by their private ſpirit, ſhould have been carefully concealed. The Holy Books may be compared to a pure Looking-glaſs; which ſhews not only the Beauty, the lovely Features and comely Proportions of thoſe Perſons that are repreſented in it, but all their Spots and Deformities. They flatter no mans Perſon, but praiſe all

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the Actions, even of bad men, which are worthy of Commendation; and reprehend all that are otherwiſe, even in the good and vertuous. And therefore,

II. We may learn ſomething from theſe Examples for the guidance of our Lives, and reforming our Manners: which is to follow Precepts, not Examples. For Examples then alone are imitable, when they are conformable to thoſe Rules, which make them good Examples. The beſt of men may erre; and therefore we are not ſo much to mind, which Way they go, as which way they *ought* to go. For there is a Rule, by which they are as much bound to walk, as we; from which if they ſwerve, we are to leave them, and ſtick to that. For againſt a Rule, no Examples can be a ſufficient Warrant. They are ſo far from having any ſuch Authority; that we are to examine, whether the Rule it ſelf by which holy men heretofore governed their actions, was a General Rule, or only Particular. For if it was ſpecial and perſonal, there it muſt reſt; and the Example of thoſe who obeyed it muſt not carry it any further. If it do; we act by our own private Authority, and apply to our ſelves things that belonged peculiarly.

culiarly to other men: and ſo, doing ſuch things as they did, without ſuch a Warrant, involve our ſelves in a Guilt of which they were innocent. In ſhort, they that do not live regularly themſelves, cannot be a Rule to others.

III. But there is ſtill a good uſe, which we may and ought to make of ſuch irregular Examples. From which we may learn ſomething that will be a Preſervative from Sin, not an Incentive to it: and that is, deep Humility; a pious Fear, with due Caution and Circumſpection; Diſtruſt of our ſelves and of our own ſtrength; with earneſt Applications to God for his gracious Aſſiſtance; and a lively Faith and Confidence in him, as our beſt Security. For if ſuch great, ſuch Holy men fell, and fell ſo foully, and bruiſed themſelves ſo ſorely; have not we juſt cauſe to be jealous of our ſelves, and to live in a godly fear, leſt we alſo be tempted, and carried away from our ſtedfaſtneſs? As we ſhall be moſt certainly; unleſs we be careful and cautious, watchful and diligent; adhering cloſely to God by a conſtant vigorous ſenſe of him preſerved in our Minds: which we ſhould learn

learn to awaken and quicken by frequent Reflection upon ſuch lamentable Examples of humane weakneſs and frailty.

IV. From which alſo we may learn, in caſe we ſhould be ſo unhappy as to be ſurprized, and fall into Sin, ſomething that may help to recover and reſtore us. Which is, not to deſpair of Gods Mercy; but to hope, by unfeigned Repentance, and greater care for the future, we may obtain a Pardon, and be accepted again into his favour, as they were; ſome of whoſe Repentance is as remarkable, in the ancient Story, as their ſin.

This is the uſe we ought to make of ſuch parts of the Holy Writings: By which, if we will encourage our ſelves to be bold to do wickedly, becauſe ſuch pious men fell into ſin; or to preſume of Gods Mercy, though we continue in it, and do not riſe again by Repentance; or take occaſion to deſpair of doing better, becauſe of the deplorable weakneſs of Humane Nature; we muſt be accountable to God, for ſuch perverſe abuſe of his Holy Word; which contains no ſuch Examples among all thoſe that it propounds to our Imitation.

V. There

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There is one thing more remaining, which if they could have made good, would have been an Objection indeed; and that is, That *the Old Teſtament oppoſes and contradicts the New.* About this *Adimantus* a *Manichee* the Maſter of *Fauſtus* wrote a whole Book: but the Inſtances he alledges are ſo frivolous, that they are ſcarce worth the confuting. I will mention one, becauſe it may ſuggeſt ſomething for our Learning, whereby you may judge of all the reſt. In the Old Teſtament we read, that if any man hurt his Neighbour, he was bound to ſatisfie to the full for the damage done, by ſuffering the very ſame himſelf; *Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth, Hand for Hand, and Foot for Foot,* &c. xxi. *Exod.* 24, 25. But our Saviour ſayes in the New Teſtament, *Whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other alſo. And if a man take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak alſo.* v. Matth. 39, 40. Are not theſe things oppoſite? I anſwer with St. *Auſtin*, who hath made an excellent Reply to this Cavil, both in his Book againſt *Adimantus* *, and againſt *Fauſtus* †; to this effect. Theſe things diſcover no contrariety in

* Cap. VIII.
† Lib. XIX. cap. 25.

in the two Teſtaments; but only the different degrees of their perfection. For there being *two* degrees of Meekneſs and Forbearance; the *firſt* that the Grief of the injured perſon do not provoke him to ſeek a revenge, beyond the meaſure of the damage that was done him; the *ſecond* that the injured perſon pardon and paſs by the whole wrong, though grievous to him, with a peaceable and appeaſed mind: the Old Teſtament, as leſs perfect, preſerved carnal men within the bounds of the firſt degree of Patience, and kept them from extending their revenge too far; but the New Teſtament, as more perfect, advances ſpiritual men to the moſt excellent degree of a plenary remiſſion, without any revenge at all.

So that even from ſuch paſſages as theſe we learn, you ſee, how much we are indebted to God, for a greater abundance of his Grace, than he beſtowed in former times. Which ſhould raiſe us, as to a greater degree of gratefull Love to him, ſo, to a more excellent degree of Piety and Vertue; to which He intends to improve us by this New

Revelation he hath made of his good will to us in Christ Jesus.

And that is part of the use we may make of what hath been said.

If we may learn so much from those Books which were written aforetime, in the dayes of old, before the Coming of our Saviour into the World: what may we do from those which were written since his appearing; who is the very Wisdom of God, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared him unto us? They prescribe us a more rational Service of Almighty God; and raise us to a higher pitch of brotherly Love; and teach us greater Purity of Body and Mind; and press all these upon us by more perfect Examples, and by more excellent Motives; especially by the blessed hope of Immortal Life; which if we have any sense of our own dearest Interest, we ought *to embrace and to hold fast* (as it is in the *Collect* for this day) being willing to do and to suffer any thing that God would have us, rather than lose so great, so incomparable a good: Which the more we think of, the more it attracts us to it, and holds

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us fast in its embraces; as a perfect satisfaction to all our desires.

But from that Consideration we may take occasion also to reflect, how injurious they are to Christian People (to whom God hath been so bountiful) who forbid them without their leave to meddle with these holy Books; wherein their Hope of Immortal Life is contained: Nay, make a severe Inquisition after them that dare be so bold as to have, in their own Language, a Copy of the Will and Testament of their blessed Saviour, (or if you please so to call it) of that Deed of Grace whereby he hath conveyed to them the Eternal Inheritance. S. *Peter* indeed, 1 *Epist.* ii. 9. honours all Christians so much as to call them *a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People*: But they, who pretend to succeed him, use them as if they were no better than base Slaves, nay vile Beasts; who are not fit to be entrusted with this Liberty, and enjoy the Priviledge of hearing God himself speaking to them in his holy Gospel. No, there is a Caution in the Law, saith *Innocent*

the third, *that if a Beast touch the Mountain, it shall be stoned*: from thence concluding that the simple and unlearned should not meddle with the Subtilty of Holy Writ. And herein we agree with him, that from all Subtilties and curious Inquiries, every body ought to abstain; But we are not satisfied that He or any man else hath Authority, to compare the People of God to Beasts. As others among them have done in a most scornfull manner; when they prove from hence that the People must not read the Scriptures, because we must *not cast that which is holy to Dogs, nor throw Pearls before Swine*. This is very rude Language, but the Authors are well known who have spoken thus contemptuously of the Flock of Christ (whom *he* calls *his Sheep*, but they call *Dogs* and *Swine*) and thereby debased Christians below the most blockish *Jews*, who did never so abuse their Holy Books, as to forfeit the liberty of Reading them; which they challenge and use as a Right belonging to all at this very day. What Reason can be given for such unworthy Treatment of those whom the Apostles so highly esteemed, and spake

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of with so much respect, but only this; that they see there is such a manifest disagreement between them and the Scriptures, that their Errours would be in danger to be detected by the simplest people, if they should be permitted to come into this light.

And here let me note, that such guides are falln into a contrary errour, to that of the *Manichees*, of which I have now treated. They do not say, that the Books of the *Old Testament* are superfluous and unnecessary; but that they, and the Books of the *New Testament* to boot, are defective and imperfect: and that their defects must be supplied, out of such Traditions as they propound to our belief. But among opposite Errours, the causes of erring are commonly the same, as the great Philosopher observes; and is very true in this case. For though there be several wayes the Enemy of mankind hath taken, to compass his design of bringing the Scriptures into disgrace, and setting up the inventions of men instead of them, or in Conjunction with them; yet the reason still is one and the same: which is, that the holy Scriptures are not for his

turn;

turn; he cannot deceive men so easily, if they keep close to this hold. Which is a strong hold indeed; and comprehends all that we need to *know*, or *believe*, or *do*: to which nothing need, nothing ought to be added as necessary to our Salvation. According to that peremptory resolution of St. *Austin* in his third Book against *Petilians* Letters, (Chapt. vi.) *Whether it be about Christ, or about his Church, or about any other thing whatsoever, that belongs to Faith or to our Life, I will not say we (who are by no means to be compared with him that said,* licet nos, *although we) but as he presently adds, if an Angel from Heaven shall declare to you any thing, besides that which you have received* in Scripturis Legalibus & Evangelicis, *in the Scriptures of the Law and the Gospel, let him be accursed.*

To which let me add this notable sentence of S. *Basil* the Great, who comprehends all that I have said in a few words, in his Sermon of Faith *. *It is a manifest falling of Faith, and may be justly charged with Pride; either to reject any thing that is written; or to introduce, and bring in over and above, any thing that is not written.*

* Tom. II. pag. 251.

This was the ancient Catholick Doctrine; which

which it is the Interest (let me take the boldness to say) as well as the Duty of Christian Kings and Princes, above all other men, to assert and maintain. For by these Holy Books their Authority is as strongly supported, as by the pretended Traditions of the *Roman* Church it is notoriously undermined and subverted. Upon which account it is a point of their greatest Wisdom, not only to keep these Books in their Peoples hands; but to encourage, nay command the conscientious reading of them; that they may there learn how plainly they are taught, and how Religiously they are bound to fear, honour and obey their Sovereigns, even though they were Pagans; much more when they are Christians. Of which Liberty if they suffer their People to be deprived, they shall soon be taught that they owe no further respect to their Princes, than it pleases the Bishop of *Rome* to allow them. Who from the Dignity of a particular Bishop and Pastor of Souls, is raised to be a Worldly Monarch, above all Kings and Emperours; by sewing several patches and shreds to the ancient Christian Doctrine,

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under the Name of *Traditions*. For nothing is more apparent in Hiſtory than this; that as the Biſhop of *Rome*'s *Greatneſs* increaſed, ſo *Traditions* were ſtill more and more multiplyed; which in proceſs of time were more recommended than the Scriptures themſelves, and more Religiouſly obſerved.

There is another Reaſon alſo, why Princes ſhould keep the Holy Books open before their Subjects eyes, and ſuffer no Man to ſhut them and ſeal them up: Becauſe it plainly appears by them, that their Perſons and Office are Sacred; not a mere humane Inſtitution, but the Ordinance of God, by whom Kings reign, and by vertue of whoſe Laws they demand Obedience. The contrary to this is taught by the Popes Creatures; and will ſoon be obtruded for Chriſtian Doctrine, if the Holy Scriptures be laid aſide. *Bellarmine*, for inſtance, in his Book againſt *Barclay*, maintains, that their Power proceeds not from God, but is the Inſtitution of Man. Conformable to that memorable Maxim of Father *Binet*, in a Diſcourſe of his with the famous *Caſaubon* *, about the

* *Epiſt. ad Frontonem Ducæum.* p. 209.

the buſineſs of *Garnet* (which he calls the Immortal God to witneſs is true) *That it were better all Kings ſhould periſh, than the Seal of Confeſſion ſo much as once be violated; for the Authority of Kings is by Humane Right, but Confeſſion by Divine.* Which ſounds ſo horridly in all true Chriſtian ears, that it is hard to find any thing more contrary to common Reaſon and to the Holy Scriptures, among that ἐμβρόντητον τῆς Μανιχαίων φύλον, (as *Andræas Cæſarienſis* calls them *) that crazed, ſtupid Tribe of *Manichees*, whoſe Frenzies I have in part repreſented. But this is not a place to lay open this Myſtery of Iniquity; whereby Kings are almoſt Dethron'd, and manifeſtly deprived of that which aſſures their Crowns and their Lives; far more than the conſtant Guard of their Bodies, or the moſt powerful Armies they can raiſe. For though by thoſe they may ſtrike terror into their Subjects minds; it is only the Senſe of God that can frame their hearts to Obedience. Then the Fidelity of Subjects will be firm and unmovable, when it is incorporated into Piety, and accounted a part of Religion; a neceſſary piece of

* *cap.* IV. *in* Apocalypſ.

that Service which we owe to God Almighty. For which end the Scriptures must lye open before the People; that there they may read their Duty, and have their Souls moulded into a Sense of God; and not merely receive such Impressions, as the Interests of men shall be pleased to stamp upon them.

I conclude all with those Notable words of S. *Chrysostome* in his *Second* Homily upon S. *Matthew*; where he justifies what I have said, from the words of St. *Paul* before mentioned. *It is a great fault in Christian People, that they do not Read the Scriptures: but to think it is a needless and superfluous thing to read them, is a far greater Crime. This is language of the Devils invention: for do you not hear what* S. Paul *sayes? That these things were written for our Instruction.*

God grant we may in such wise hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that we may bring forth Fruit with Patience; and do our Duty so faithfully to Him, to our Sovereign, to one another, and

and to all men, that in the end we may attain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be given by us and by all others, all Honour, Glory and Praise, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.